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Stiltwalkers Abi Lambert, left and Rachel Hyde got into the royal brithday spirit at Banbury and District Show at the weekend.
SEE PAGE 3 FOR MORE

Right royal show

Plans to replace consultants with midwives at Banbury unit

'CUTS WILL PUT LIVES AT RISK'

LIVES will be put at risk if maternity services at Banbury's Horton General Hospital are scaled back, its MP has warned.

Victoria Prentis said the change could mean women in childbirth who experienced complications would have to be transported by ambulance to Oxford's John Radcliffe Hospital.

This is because plans being considered by Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUH) to save £2.2m would see maternity consultants moved, with the Banbury unit staffed only by midwives. A special baby care unit would also be scrapped.

It came as the trust also promised an expansion of services on offer at Horton General.

But campaigners say the risk created by reduced maternity services would be too high.

They have revived the Hands off our Horton campaign, which successfully fought from 2003 to 2008 against a downgrading of the hospital.

Banbury MP Mrs Prentis, who lost a son during childbirth in 2000, said: "I am personally very concerned by this issue and would be very worried about maternal and baby safety if these plans went ahead.

Matt Oliver
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"Midwives are fantastic, but not having consultants on site means women would be left without the option for an emergency caesarean if that became necessary.

"Instead they would have to be blue-lighted to Oxford along roads that are not up to it – and that journey can take up to an hour-and-a-half if the traffic is bad.

"It is really important we have a back-up option for these situations. I would not want anyone to go through what I went through."

She said Banbury and its surrounding area were also due to see a population rise as thousands more homes were built.

She said: "We need to make sure we have the right building blocks in place. Maternal and child safety is crucial to that."

According to consumer website Which? about 1,500 births took place at the Horton in 2013/14. There are consultants on the wards for 20 hours a week.

Keith Strangwood, chairman of the Keep the Horton General campaign, said: "These measures are just about saving money but if they go ahead they could end up costing a life.

"There are mothers going to the Horton who may have complications at the last minute. Having consultants on site means those can be dealt with straight away."

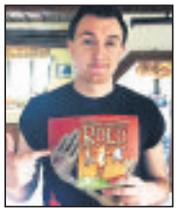
An OUH spokesman could not break down how the measures would save money. But he added: "The trust is undertaking a clinically-led review of the Horton General Hospital to ensure it meets future healthcare needs and proposals are being aligned with and developed alongside the Oxfordshire 'transformation' plans.

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Teacher makes his book debut



A PART-TIME pirate-come drama teacher from North Oxfordshire has published his first children's book.

Lawrence Prestidge, 26, has worked with children all his life, from a stint at Disneyland and as a Jack Sparrow impersonator for the Make-a-Wish foundation to teaching at North Oxfordshire Academy.

Mr Prestidge, from Great Bourton, has now used that passion for working with children to create his first children's tale entitled *Rolo*. He said: "It was whilst I was teaching and doing a bit of babysitting that I started to come up with the idea."

The story follows a little boy, Max, who lives with his aunt, uncle and cousin, the Whitfield family. Unfortunately the Whitfields are not a loving family and Max decides to run away to the forest and makes an unlikely friend – the nine-foot tall Giant Walpertinger.

The book is aimed at youngsters aged between five and seven.

He said: "At 18 years old I worked at Disneyland for two years in the character and parade department and in the stage shows before coming back here to get into drama teaching."

Mr Prestidge also volunteers his time as a Jack Sparrow impersonator for the Make-a-Wish foundation which supports young people with life-threatening conditions.

He is also continuing to providing private mentoring outside of school for children on the autistic spectrum.

Mr Prestidge said: "It has been great, all my friends and family have been really supportive."

He hopes to continue by creating a series following *Rolo*.

Activity bus for kids takes prize at business awards

Charity workers provide after-school activities for community's children

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

AN ACTIVITY bus that supports more than 4,000 adults and children every year in Banbury has taken a top prize at the Cherwell Business Awards.

The Banbury and District Community Bus Project – known as the Play Bus – won the charity and community category for its work in providing after-school activities for children.

Founded in 1998, the bus is based at the East Street Children's Centre and last year supported 4,486 children and adults in the community.

Lynn Pratt, Cherwell District Council's lead member for estates and economy, said: "The Play Bus is a longstanding focal point of our children's lives.

"This is demonstrated by the fact that many of its users have gone on to volunteer with the service as adults."

The category runner-ups were Banbury-based Second Time Around, a furniture restoration project for people with learning disabilities, and the Hummingbird Centre in Bicester, which promotes complementary therapies and lifestyle changes to cancer sufferers.



Michelle Pollard, centre, manager of the Play Bus, and her team with the Cherwell Business Award

Butter, eggs and flour proved the perfect recipe to secure Bicester-based British Bakels top spot as the Cherwell business of the year.

The company, which has been manufacturing and distributing bakery ingredients in the town since 1990, also won the "established business" award.

Product development manager Greg Woodhead said: "Bakels celebrated its 25th anniversary in Bicester during 2015 and its most successful year ever.

"It felt natural for the management team to want to celebrate this and entering the Cherwell Business Awards seemed like a great opportunity. "

Mr Woodhead said the awards were "especially gratifying" given the high level of competition shown from the other businesses nominated.

He added: "Working in such a competitive and fast-paced environment as the food industry can often lead to us all overlooking how much we are achieving.

"To have this recognised by respected peers in other companies is an incredible confirmation that we are following the right path."

Other winners included JD'Cruz Ltd in the new business award, Nicholsons Nurseries as employers of the year and Begbroke Science Park for innovation and creativity.

Business person of the year was won by Simon Biltcliffe of Webmart Ltd.

Burgess Reclamation won the micro business award, the small business award was won by Butterflies Healthcare and High Spec composites won the apprenticeship award.

All finalists will now go forward for the Oxfordshire Business Awards 2016 taking place on Friday, June 17, at the Oxford Thames Four Pillars Hotel, Sandford-on-Thames.

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Above from left, Alice Ormond, seven, Megan Carey, six, Amy Carey, six and Olly Ormond, seven; left, Harry Davies enjoys the fairground; below left, labradoodle Alfie goes through his paces with the Banbury Cross Flyball Club and, below, dancers from the Julie Bruce Dance/Drama Academy wait to go on

Patriotic crowds join in with royal celebrations

The Queen's 90th birthday provides backdrop as revellers flock to the Banbury and District Show

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

BANBURY and District Show was swept up in the royal celebrations with red, white and blue flooding through Spiceball Park.

The Queen's 90th birthday proved a fitting theme for the annual event as visitors enjoyed watching dancers, marching bands, dog races and a traditional fun fair.

The event once again drew in big crowds from far and wide to enjoy a fun-packed – while slightly drizzly – celebration.

A montage of films depicting the 90 years of the Queen played proudly across the park while revellers enjoyed the vast array of games and food on hand.

For new town mayor Gordon Ross, the show represented his first major public event since taking up his position last month.

He said: "It was a brilliant day apart from the weather, which did dampen things down a bit.

"I asked quite a few people what they thought and they all said the same thing, that it all went very well.

"I made sure I visited all the stalls and the local organisations there, including the Royal British Legion and Samaritans."

Dog lovers also got stuck into the main arena where Banbury Cross Flyball Club and its canines put on a performance.

Elsewhere in the show, the City of Coventry Corps of Drum staged a performance of their own, with a marching band paying tribute to Her Majesty and her tremendous milestone.

Funding grants for arts centre

THE Mill Arts Centre Trust has received two grants since it became a registered charity in April.

It has collected £18,000 in funding from the Transform Foundation, which helps use technology to boost businesses.

The money will go towards a new mobile friendly website that will be launched in September.

Thanks to ongoing support from Arts Council England, this month will also see a series of dance performances taking place at the Mill.

These include shows from Motionhouse, Pagrav Dance, Let's All Dance and a world premiere from Yorke Dance Project.

There will also be workshops and open rehearsals for schools and colleges, older people, community groups and professional dancers.

The centre trust also received funding from Banbury Charities and Banbury Town Council to refurbish the bar and cafe area, the second phase of which is due to start next month.

Centre trust chairman Keith Mitchell said: "Securing charitable status is a significant milestone that opens up avenues previously closed to us."

Leave notice

A GROUP of travellers that parked up in a Banbury field last Friday have been given notice to leave by Cherwell District Council.

The group, which were reportedly mainly from one family and had dogs, chickens and a cat, had stopped in a park by the hill in Hanwell Fields.

Local councillor Tony Ilott visited them on Saturday and said the group had been "very pleasant and friendly".

After the notice was served several campervans were spotted driving away from the site on Monday afternoon.

Sexual assault

A MAN has been arrested after a woman in her sixties was sexually assaulted on a bus in Banbury.

It happened on the B5 Stagecoach bus on Tuesday, May 17, when the victim was touched inappropriately by a male passenger.

Thames Valley Police said on Saturday that a 67-year-old man from Banbury had been arrested.

He has been released on police bail until June 27.

Churches team up for non-stop prayers

BANBURY Salvation Army is teaming up with other churches to host two weeks of non-stop day and night prayer at its George Street base.

It will be open around the clock from 5pm on Sunday to 5pm on July 3 for people to take part in a series of multi-sensory "prayer stations".

Visitors are invited to light a candle, reflect on a passage from the Bible or express their prayer artistically, with staff on hand to welcome and assist.

Church leader Lieutenant Xander Coleman said: "God's always listening to us when we talk to him, but sometimes we all need some help to pray in new and different ways.

"We'd love to see you. You may want someone to pray with you or perhaps you just need a chat. Everyone is welcome."

For the past eight years the Salvation Army has played an active role within the Banbury Christians Together network and has been holding 24/7 prayer events since 2012.

Lieutenant Xander said: "The Salvation Army is dedicated to caring for community, but that care is motivated by a deep love for God. We love Banbury, so it's natural for us to express that love through prayer and practical social action."

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Town club offers cut-price boxing classes for youth



YOUNGSTERS in Banbury can dodge and weave without breaking the bank thanks to subsidised boxing sessions.

Banbury Boxing Club is offering the service, which includes female-only sessions and mixed classes, thanks to funding from Sport England's Sportivate programme.

The national initiative helps fund local authorities, including Cherwell District Council, to increase sporting opportunities for young people.

Cherwell deputy leader councillor George Reynolds said: "Boxing is not just about learning to land blows. It teaches respect, agility and self-control.

"The sport is a great way to get fit, increase stamina and be lighter on one's feet.

"By lowering the barrier to entry we can give those who have never boxed before, or would like to return to the sport, their opportunity to throw their hat in the ring.

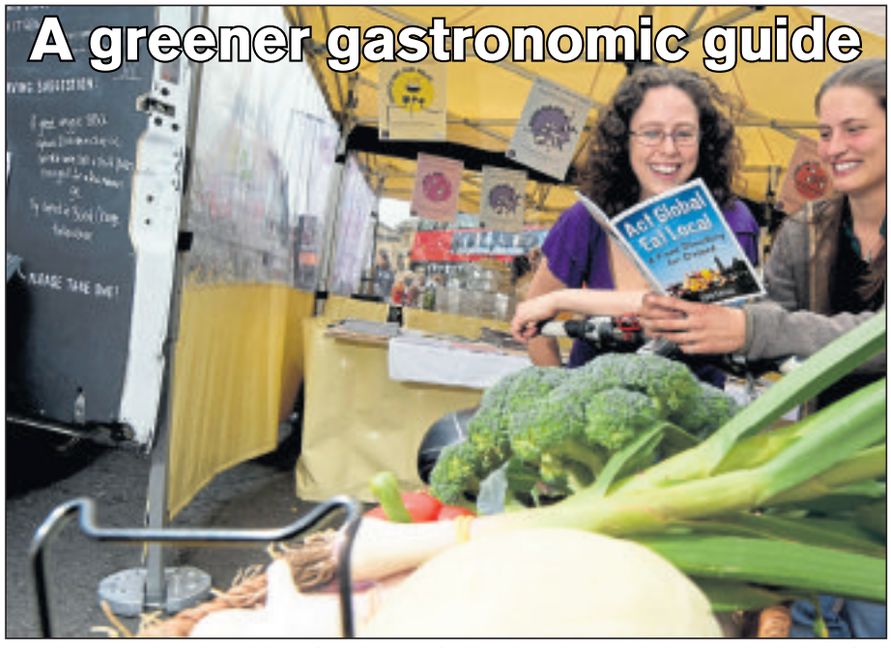
"I hope this initiative will give our younger people the boxing bug and encourage them to lead more active lifestyles."

Sessions are open to anybody irrespective of ability and include a full-body workout with circuit-based activities and pad work.

Female-only classes are on Tuesdays, from 6.30pm-7.30pm for 10 to 15-year-olds and from 7.30pm-9pm for 16 to 25-year-olds.

Mixed sessions are on Mondays and Thursdays. All classes are at the boxing club in Broad Street. Go to cherwell.gov.uk

A greener gastronomic guide



Hannah Fenton and Martha Wiltshire of Good Food Oxford launching the Act Global, Eat Local Oxfordshire food guide at Oxford's Big Green Day Out

CHOCOLATE from Banbury, goat's cheese from Witney, wine from Abingdon and honey from Wallingford: a new local food guide for Oxfordshire tells you where you can buy it all.

More than 50 independent farmers, bakers and brewers from Oxfordshire are listed in a new food directory for Oxford, entitled Act Global, Eat Local.

The 32-page booklet, priced £1, aims to help people buy local, support Oxfordshire businesses and reduce their carbon footprint.

Among the independent producers listed are The Chicken Shed in Souldern, which specialises in organic chocolate, The Meat Joint in Deddington, North Aston Organics, Windrush Valley Goat Dairy, Bothy Vineyard near Marcham and Brightwell Bees, which sells beeswax candles and polish as well as honey.

Womersley Fruit and Herb Vinegars in Chipping Norton and the Shotover Brewing Company are also among the more quirky shops.

The booklet and an accompanying interactive map online have been produced by community group Low Carbon Oxford North (LCON) in association with local producers' network Good Food Oxford.

Dr Alison Hill, from LCON, insisted buying local was not just about helping the environment, but also about the quality of produce.

She said: "Eating locally sourced food is good for you, for the climate, for the land, and for the local economy.

"Food is fresher and seasonal; you can find out how it is grown, reduce food miles and invest in local farming and local businesses."

According to the group, the carbon footprint of the food consumed in Oxford each year is double that of all the cars driven through the city.

Manager Hannah Fenton said: "What Oxford eats accounts for around a fifth of its total carbon emissions.

"The food system of the city is responsible for the equivalent of 380,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide every year.

"To put it into context, this is twice the emissions arising from all of the cars in the city."

In a city which consumes nearly 130,000 tonnes of food a year, Ms Fenton said just 52 per cent comes from the UK and a mere one per cent comes from local sources.

She said: "Eating local food could reduce an individual's carbon emission by 13 per cent."

The guide will be sold at retail outlets listed inside, Oxford farmer's markets and food shops and on the veg van of local food co-op Cultivate which stops in Oxford. It can also be downloaded free of charge: lcon.org.uk/food/local-food-suppliers.

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Tributes paid to father, 55, who died after a fall

Neighbour described Mr Silver as a 'friendly man'

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

A STUDENT this week paid tribute to his father who died after falling down a flight of stairs in Banbury.

Mark Silver, 55, was found dead at a friend's house in the Causeway last month.

He had been living in St Leonard's Close for five years.

His son Kane, who is studying at University of York, said his father moved to the area to spend time with family.

He was born in Thame, but also lived in Deddington and Clacton-on-Sea before moving to Banbury.

Mr Silver, 25, said: "He was very well known in the area. It was nice he was able to spend his last few years here among his family. He had a series of heart attacks about 15 years ago and found it difficult to work after that."



Mark Silver

Following the death Mr Silver started an online petition after saying he had been told by the house's owner, Sanctuary Housing, he would have to pay £350 in rent for the notice period, because his father had not left an estate.

The petition, signed by about 160 people, called on councils and housing associations to stop charging families of the recently deceased.

The housing association confirmed it would not charge for rent if no estate had been left and would waive the money owed.

The dead man's neighbour, Christopher Bishop, also paid tribute to his friend, saying he was a "friendly man" who would talk to anybody.

He added: "I could not believe it when I heard about him. It was just such a shock."

A 63-year-old man from Banbury was arrested on suspicion of murder the same day as the death but released without charge a day later.

Mr Silver's funeral will be held at Banbury Crematorium in Southam Road on Friday at 11am.

A date for the inquest has not yet been set.

Hospice's midnight walk is set to sparkle

HUNDREDS of people will sparkle with silver when they take part in Katharine House Hospice's 10th Midnight Walk later this month.

The 10-mile walk around Banbury is its biggest fundraiser, bringing in more than £700,000 in the last nine years.

Among those taking part on June 25 will be Sallie Connery and Connie Roberston, who have both joined in every walk so far.

Ms Connery said: "The event is great fun. It's a brilliant atmosphere and an opportunity for people to get together.

"They can dress up in wacky clothes and raise funds that we know will go directly to patient care in the local community."

This year's event has a silver theme, with walkers asked to wear as many sparkles as possible to celebrate 25 years since the hospice was started.

Last year the walk had a carnival theme, with 308 people taking on the route around Banbury for fun, to raise their fitness or in memory of family and friends.

Money raised will go towards some of the running costs at Katharine House, in Adderbury, which cares for about 800 people per year and needs £3.6m annually to keep going.

Katharine House communications officer Chris Higgins said: "It costs £10,000 to run the hospice every day, less than a third of which comes from the government.

"The rest must be raised through trust income and fundraising efforts.

"The local community really gets behind the hospice with generous donations of their time and money to ensure we can continue to provide care to patients in local villages and towns."

Registration for this year's event costs £20 and the closing date for entries is June 23.

Entries on the night will be restricted to friends and family of pre-registered walkers and will cost £50.

To register for the walk go to khh.org.uk



Sallie Connery and Connie Robertson

Pub festival raises more than £1,000

A PUB festival in Banbury has raised more than £1,000 for two charities looking after sick patients in the area.

Ye Olde Reindeer Inn hosted the Drinking Beer, Jammin' Deer festival raising money for Katharine House Hospice in Adderbury and Horton General Hospital radio charity – Horton Radio.

The event last weekend saw nine local bands perform at the 16th century pub and the money, which is still being counted, will be split between the two charities.

A date has already been set for next year's festival on June 2 and 3, 2017.

Audition for play

ASPIRING actors and actresses are being invited to audition for Banbury Cross Players' latest production *The Crucible*.

The play by Arthur Miller focuses on the fate of those caught up in the persecution surrounding the 1692 Salem witch trials.

In particular the group are looking for four actresses aged 16 to 20 to take on younger female roles.

Open auditions will take place at the Mill Arts Centre on Thursday, June 30, from 7.30pm.

Performances are from November 2-5 at the arts centre.

Shed break-ins

TWO sheds were broken into in the Banbury area overnight on Tuesday, June 1.

One was in Abbey Road and the other in South Bar Street.

Police are urging anyone with information to call the Banbury Neighbourhood Police Team on 101.

House parties for homes' residents

Homes across the county to mark National Care Homes Day on Saturday

Kieran Davey
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THE Swinging 60s, Alice in Wonderland and the British tradition of fish and chips will all play a part in celebrating National Care Homes open day.

Homes across the county are calling on people to grab a knife and fork or put on fancy dress and get involved on Friday.

Elderly residents will be leading the way with parties through the decades, including heading back to the Swinging 60s in Woodstock and the 1990s in Kidlington.

The Orders of St John Care Trust (OSJCT) is opening up 17 of its care homes to members of the community with a jam-packed schedule of parties.

There is an international flavour to celebrations at Lake House in Banbury.

Staff and residents will be holding a world-themed party with guests dressing up in their country's traditional garb. There will also be food from different countries, a street party including a visit from a corgi PAT dog, a full size cut-out of the Queen, royal family masks, a small raffle and a large decorated cake.

OSJCT Oxfordshire assistant operations director Patsy Just said: "National Care Home Open Day is all about connecting people and inviting the local community into our homes to have a look around and join in some of the fun filled activities we have arranged.

"It is also a perfect opportunity for our residents to continue celebrations to mark the Queen's 90th birthday."

Her Majesty's official birthday was on Saturday, and to mark that many of the care home celebrations will take on a royal theme, including Henry Cornish Care Centre in Chipping Norton, which is hosting a street party, and Meadowcroft in Thame, which is planning a "Queen through the decades" day. Elsewhere in the county there will be a 90s-themed day full of games, raffles and sweets at Glebe House in Kidlington, a coffee morning and karaoke at Langford View in Bicester, an Ascot-themed multi-decade party in Madley Park House, Witney, and a 50s quiz and bingo at the Old Station House, Abingdon.

Spencer Court in Woodstock will be turning back time for a 60s party, it's the 1970s for The Meadows in Didcot and all decades in Westgate House in Wallingford, including a fish and chips tea.

There will be a twist for residents in Wantage, as Stirling House takes on an Alice in Wonderland theme with "eat me" cakes, fancy dress and a petting zoo.

Ms Just said: "From hosting weekly community coffee mornings to welcoming local schools to spend an afternoon with residents, building strong ties within our local communities is extremely important for the trust."



Taxi test to keep customers safer

A NEW "fit and proper person" test is to be introduced for taxi drivers in north Oxfordshire to give more protection to passengers.

Cherwell District Council has agreed to hold a public consultation on a new licensing policy to introduce stricter standards for drivers.

New safeguarding training would make drivers more alert to the risks passengers face, and encourage vigilance when reporting any misconduct or criminal activity.

The new test also vets would-be cabbies for their general demeanour, financial practices and honesty before they get behind the wheel.

The council's lead member for public protection, Tony Ilott, said: "The goal here is to safeguard vulnerable passengers and make taxi travel a more pleasant experience. Licensed taxi drivers are ambassadors for the council and this new policy will make sure that they behave as such.

"We are aware of the vulnerability of passengers such as children and those in a state of intoxication, and will now consult with police and other local authorities to determine how we can best meet everyone's needs in future."

The test will run alongside a new spoken English test and stricter use of criminal records.

A penalty points scheme will keep track of infringements and the council will be empowered to revoke licences in cases of serious or repeated offences.

New affordable development

CONSTRUCTION is under way on 153 new affordable homes to the north of Banbury.

Housing provider Stonewater is building a mix of 46 two and three-bedroom homes for shared ownership, and 107 one and two-bedroom flats, houses and bungalows in their new Hanwell View development.

The homes are being built in phases over four years, with the first due to be completed in October.

Chris Montague, head of development for Stonewater, said: "With access to the housing market so challenging, affordable housing has never been more important, particularly in this part of Oxfordshire where property can be hugely expensive and out of many people's reach.

"These new homes in Hanwell View will give local people an opportunity to afford their own home, close to their family, friends and work."

The company is working alongside Cherwell District Council and developers Bellway Homes.

Cherwell's lead member for housing John Donaldson said: "As house prices continue to increase there is a growing demand for affordable homes across Cherwell.

"We welcome the provision of so many sought-after homes."

House volunteers sought to help keep history alive

STAFF at Upton House are looking for new volunteers to join their busy team ahead of the summer.

The historic country mansion and gardens, owned by the National Trust, has roles available ranging from guiding tours around the grounds to making tea for guests.

In particular the trust is looking to fill the position of marketing and events assistant to help promote the house on social media, write marketing promotions and plan the property's events programme for the next year.

Other roles available include the welcome team – which guides visitors around the site and offers information and advice when needed – retail shop assistants and 1940s visitor experience volunteers, who get involved in chats, demonstrations and activities to keep the house's history alive.

For more details go to nationaltrust.org.uk or call 01295 670266.

Couple are injured after their cars crash head-on



Firefighters rescue the couple following the crash in Hook Norton

Andy Ffrench
affrench@nqo.com

A COUPLE were injured on a country road when their vehicles crashed into each other.

The man and woman were both driving along Station Road, Hook Norton, at about 4pm on Monday when the collision happened.

One was lucky not be more seriously hurt as their vehicle came to rest on the edge of a vertical drop overhanging a lake.

Firefighters from Hook Norton, Chipping Norton and Banbury fire stations cut free one of the trapped drivers.

Incident commander Nigel Matthews said: "This was an incident of a couple who collided going in opposite directions. In all my years I have never been called to such an incident.

"I would like to remind all drivers of the need to be prepared for heavy downpours at this time of the year.

"Ensure your wiper blades are in good working order and that you reduce your speed accordingly.

"Surfaces can become temporarily flooded and slippery, so stopping distances will increase."

South Central Ambulance spokeswoman Michelle Archer said the woman suffered chest and leg injuries and was taken to the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford for treatment.

The man was treated for chest injuries.

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Fire hazard warning to boat owners

BOAT owners in Oxfordshire have been warned to be aware of fire hazards.

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service said vessels on the county's waterways should have working alarms to detect smoke and carbon monoxide.

In the past two decades, 30 boaters in the UK have been killed in boat fires and another 30 lost their lives to the "silent killer" carbon monoxide, station manager Chris Barber said.

His warning comes ahead of the boating season and was part of national Boat Safety Week earlier this month. Mr Barber added: "Boat owners should understand the risks, make regular, basic checks, and follow their engine and appliance operating guidelines, as the essential steps to deal with the fire and carbon monoxide threat.

"Although boat fires on inland waters are less common than fires on land, when they do occur they have devastating consequences.

"As well as taking fire safety on the boat into account, we would urge boaters to ensure that they know their location at all times so that in the event of any emergency we can get reach them as soon as possible."

Anyone seeking information about installing smoke alarms could call 08000 325 999, he said.

In addition, he said every boat should have at least one fire extinguisher near an exit and fire-retardant furnishings and insulation.

Boaters should avoid using portable gas equipment where possible, the fire service said, and store all gas canisters in special gas lockers or open places where any leaks will flow overboard.

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MP calls for reform in prison service

PRISONS need more staff, fewer inmates and should focus more on rehabilitation, an Oxfordshire MP has said.

Banbury MP Victoria Prentis made calls for reform when she spoke in a debate in the House of Commons.

The former barrister serves on the justice select committee in Parliament.

She also highlighted the growing danger posed by psychoactive substances in prisons and welcomed the criminalisation of their possession.

Speaking during the debate she said: "The Ministry of Justice is showing bravery in getting rid of barriers both physical, in the form of old prisons, and structural, such as the surely now outdated idea of categorisation.

"The vision is a compassionate one, but it is founded on sound conservative principles."

Policeman sent sensitive emails

Community service after officer shared witness protection details

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

A POLICE officer has been sentenced to 150 hours' community service after admitting sending sensitive information from his force computer to his father.

Matthew Oaten, a constable based in Banbury, pleaded guilty last week to three charges of computer misuse and two of breaching the Data Protection Act.

Winchester Crown Court heard the charges related to sending sensitive witness protection information and police operational data by an insecure email to his father.

The offences, some of which are alleged to have happened while he was on duty, happened between February 2013 and May last year.

The 30-year-old is currently suspended from duty.

During last week's hearing Gregory Fishwick, defending, said: "He accepts by accessing the command control computer when not an officer allocated to this job, he has committed the offence of computer misuse. There was no gain to himself.

"The defendant accepts he must have sent the offending emails but he cannot say why he did so. His father has no memories of receiving or opening them.

"He had no ulterior motive or gain."

Oaten, of Goodwood Close, Bicester, was sentenced to 150 hours' community service and ordered to pay £1,000 costs

Thames Valley Police spokesman Gareth Ford-Lloyd said: "Following the officer's guilty plea and subsequent sentencing at Winchester Crown Court to criminal offences, which were brought following an investigation by Thames Valley Police's professional standards department, the force will be progressing gross misconduct proceedings in respect of the officer.

"We cannot offer further comment while this legal process is ongoing."



Deddington Explorer Scouts taking part in their new bicycle recycling project

Scouts give bicycles new life

SCOUTS in Deddington have been helping to repair bicycles as part of a new recycling project.

Boys and girls from the Spartans Explorer Scout Unit helped recycle bikes that had been broken by taking working parts from several machines to make a new one.

They also carried out bike maintenance for Bloxham Pre-School and used the project as part of their Platinum Chief Scout Award.

Explorer scout Ollie Betteridge said: "I love Scouts. It allows you to experience many new things, like skiing, camping and more.

"These experiences allow young people like me to build character and have great life-long memories."

On Saturday, June 25, the group will be collecting unwanted adult bicycles from 10am to 2pm at the Windmill Centre in Hempton Road.

From there the bikes will be taken to retailers Halfords, who are helping with the recycling project, before being flown out to worthy recipients in Africa.

Adult volunteer Janet Duxbury said: "I've been able to help many young people develop for their future in society.

"I still see some of the people who have been involved in Scouts and am proud to say that being involved in Scouting helped them decide which career path to choose."

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Scales of justice

CASES heard recently at magistrates courts:

OXFORD

Sally Ann Moore, 49, of Evenlode, Banbury, admitted speeding while driving a large goods vehicle or passenger carrying vehicle in Bucknell Road, Bicester, on April 18 last year. Fined £145 and ordered to pay a £20 victim surcharge and £85 costs. Driving licence endorsed with six points.

Michael Cross, 33, of Cornish Road, Chipping Norton, admitted driving without insurance in High Street, Chipping Norton, on October 17 last year. Also admitted driving otherwise than in accordance with a licence. Fined £265 and with a £27 victim surcharge and £85 costs. Licence endorsed with six points.

BANBURY

Wayne Haines, 52, of Cawley Road, Twyford, Banbury, admitted drink-driving in Cawley Road, Twyford, Banbury, on May 6 this year. Had 93 microgrammes of alcohol in 100ml of breath, above 35 microgramme limit. Handed a £140 fine and ordered to pay £30 victim surcharge and £85 costs. Also banned from driving for 24 months.

Jennifer McKie, 31, of Fritwell Road, Fewcott, admitted stealing eight DVDs worth £38 belonging to Sainsbury's in Oxford Road, Banbury, on May 8 this year. Also admitted commissioning a further offence while subject to a conditional discharge imposed by Oxfordshire Magistrates' Court in January this year for two counts of stealing DVDs from the WH Smith in Banbury in September last year and January this year. Handed a community order with a nine-month drug rehabilitation requirement and rehabilitation activity requirement of up to 20 days. Also ordered to pay £85 victim surcharge and £40 costs.

Christopher Wallace, 31, of Usher Drive, Banbury, admitted assaulting Vanessa Wallace by beating her in Banbury on May 2 this year. Handed a community order with a rehabilitation activity requirement of up to 30 days. Also ordered to pay £85 victim surcharge and £85 costs.

Pupils give flower beds a royal transformation

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

FLOWER beds in Banbury's People's Park were given a distinct red, white and blue look to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday.

Children from the town's primary schools planted patriotic flowers and shrubs to mark the occasion at the weekend.

It was part of the Planting in the Park competition, which saw about 400 pupils from 12 schools transform the flower beds into gardens fit for a queen.

As a crowning glory, they also created centrepieces for the beds to add to the royal atmosphere.

The competition was organised by Banbury Town Council.

Town mayor Gordon Ross, one of the judges, said: "The number of pupils taking part this year shows how worthwhile this event is.

"Everyone I have spoken to has had a great day and they have been bubbling with enthusiasm from start to finish."

The young people were all armed with trowels, spades and dibbers, and used nearly 6,000 plants between them as they turned empty flower beds into colourful displays.

The event was run as part of Banbury in Bloom to encourage young people to develop an interest in nature and horticulture.



Pupils from Frank Wise School have their turn at Planting In The Park

Fellow judge, councillor Colin Clarke, chairman of the town council's general services committee, said: "Choosing winners was very difficult. The flower beds and centrepieces are of an extremely high standard and I congratulate the schools for their imagination and their energy."

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Decided mortal effort from Gods of Egypt disappoints

GODS OF EGYPT **(12A, 127 mins) Action/Fantasy/Adventure/ Romance. Gerard Butler, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, Brenton Thwaites, Elodie Yung, Courtney Eaton, Geoffrey Rush, Bryan Brown, Rachael Blake. Director: Alex Proyas**

SWORDS, sandals and silliness are in abundance in Alex Proyas' lumbering fantasy adventure, set in a sprawling ancient Egypt in which shape-shifting gods live side-by-side with awestruck mortals.

According to a laconic voiceover, the deities are easily identifiable because they are taller and have "gold running through their veins".

Alas, there is no gold – fool's or otherwise –running through Matt Sazama and Burk Sharpless' uneven script, which is heavy on the muscle-flexing and sibling rivalry and light on everything that matters; coherent plotting, characterisation, dramatic momentum or emotional depth.

The tone is wildly uneven, careening between bombastic computer-generated spectacle, bickering romance and mismatched buddy comedy.

Even the digital trickery can't find its groove.

A chariot sequence is hilariously shoddy in its execution, special effects don't gel with live action elements and director Proyas insists on choreographing every bruising fight sequence with swirling camerawork and excessive slow motion.



Clash Of The Titans and *The Neverending Story* are nostalgic reference points and an overblown tomb-raiding sequence nods to *Indiana Jones*, when an acrobatic thief spies creepy crawlies on the floor and deadpans, "Where do you find that many scorpions?"

Like so many elements in Proyas' film, they are digitally rendered and unconvincing.

Benevolent King Osiris (Bryan Brown) is poised to crown his self-doubting son, Horus (Nikolaj Coster-Waldau), the new ruler of Egypt in front of an adoring throng, including his wife, Isis (Rachael Blake), and Horus' lover, Hathor (Elodie Yung), the goddess of love.

At the last minute, Osiris' jealous brother Set (Gerard Butler) gate-crashes the ceremony, murders the old king and seizes the throne.

"Behold the fate of those who stand in my way!" bellows Set, who demands that gods and mortals bow before him.

Horus attempts to avenge his father, but Set is too powerful and rips out his nephew's eyes.

Humble pickpocket Bek (Brenton Thwaites) and slave girl sweetheart Zaya (Courtney Eaton) set forth to overthrow Set by stealing back Horus' peepers.

The plan goes tragically awry and Bek enters into a dangerous pact with Horus to complete his mission, aided by the rightful king's grandfather, Ra (Geoffrey Rush), who shoots fiery bolts harnessed from the sun from his watchtower in the heavens.

Gods Of Egypt is a morass of oiled pecs, male posturing and tiresome showdowns between exiled heroes and otherworldly creatures.



Butler chews scenery with a roaring Scottish accent like a man who hasn't eaten for months, while Coster-Waldau and Thwaites are bland and possess no palpable screen chemistry.

During one of their awkward verbal jousts, Thwaites questions if his hunky co-star is being funny.

"You think I put any effort into trying to amuse you?" responds Coster-Waldau

Gods Of Egypt certainly doesn't break a sweat trying to entertain us.

Cake Bookworm

The Many Selves Of Katherine North **by Emma Green is published in hardback by Bloomsbury Circus, priced £14.99 (ebook £8.96)**

DEBUT novelist Emma Green's foray into literary science fiction focuses on Katherine "Kit" North, a 19-year-old who projects her consciousness into animals for research purposes. While living as an urban fox, she suffers an 'incident' that threatens her job, then her life, as she discovers that the company she has served for seven years is not as it seems. Green flips between past and present, human and creature to tell Kit's coming-of-age story, racking up suspense with a deftly handled environmental slant, while trying to describe radically different ways of experiencing the world. Green's psychological approach to the empathy and disconnect constantly shedding identities causes in its human protagonist lifts *The Many Selves* into an engaging take on established tropes.

The Fireman **by Joe Hill is published in hardback by Gollancz, priced £20 (ebook £9.99)**

Stephen King's son Joe Hill is currently enjoying his own successful run of novels, including *Horns,* which was made into a film starring Daniel Radcliffe. His fourth, *The Fireman,* is a welcome change to the 'end of humanity' genre. A mysterious, fatal virus is spreading though the world; named Dragonscale, it takes over the person until one day they spontaneously combust. The story centres on school nurse Harper Grayson, who finds out she is pregnant, but also suffering from this virus. Her plan is simple – she must learn to control the fire and survive long enough to give birth, and avoid her husband who blames her for 'sentencing him to death' and is out for revenge. In order for her to stand a chance of survival, she must learn from a stranger, The Fireman, who has harnessed the illness. *Vinegar Girl* **by Anne Tyler is published in hardback by Hogarth Shakespeare, priced £16.99 (ebook £9.99)**

This modern retelling by Pulitzer prizewinner Anne Tyler of *The Taming Of The Shrew* is the latest in Hogarth's series of novels bringing Shakespeare up-to-date. Kate Battista is put upon by her scientist father and her younger sister Bunny. Having had her plans derailed by the loss of her mother, Kate is stalled as the housekeeper to the family. And she's in trouble at work in a school for her forthright opinions. Then her father comes home with a problem – his genius assistant Pyotr is about to be deported. For Dr Battista the solution is obvious – his on-the-shelf daughter should marry Pyotr. Kate feels hurt and manipulated. The interplay of father and daughter is at the heart of the novel, even more than that of Kate and the blunt Pyotr.

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Cloudy2Clear service the Oxford, Banbury & Abingdon areas and Trevor is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated.'

So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Trevor a call for a free quotation on **0800 61 21 118** and he'll be happy to help!



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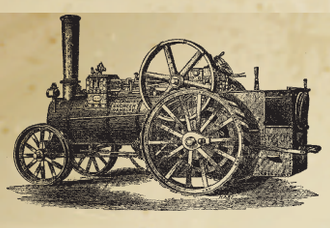
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Oxfordshire Listings

Events

THURSDAY

Hailey Festival Scarecrow Trail: Middletown, Hailey. Characters from cartoon films. Free maps from Lamb & Flag. Competition to identify all of the characters. 9am. Free. 01993 899125.

National Gardens Scheme: Nuffield Place, Huntercombe, Henley on Thames. Nine acres laid out during the Arts and Crafts period and just after WW1. This is a garden restoration in action where you can see mature specimen trees, yew hedges, a pergola, herbaceous borders, a rock garden and hidden pathways in various states of repair. Dogs on leads. Plant sale. Homemade teas. 11am. Adult £4, chd £3. 01491 641224.

National Gardens Scheme: Greenfield Farm, Christmas Common, Watlington. Evening opening only. Ten-acre wildflower meadow surrounded by woodland, established 18 years ago under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. Traditional Chiltern chalkland meadow in beautiful peaceful setting with 100 species of perennial wild flowers. Half-mile walk from car park to meadow. Guided tour at 6pm which lasts for two hours and is 1.5 miles long. Dogs on leads.

Witney U3A: Witney Methodist Church, High Street, Witney. Clare Sargant, the archivist of Radley College will be talking about the history of one of the country's leading public schools. 2pm. 01993 772040.

FRIDAY

Abingdon Farmers' Market: Market Square, Abingdon. 8.30am. 01235 227266.

National Gardens Scheme: Asthall Manor, Asthall, Burford. Evening opening only. Six acres of dramatic planting surround the C17 Cotswold manor house once home to the Mitford family (not open). Partial wheelchair access. Dogs on leads. Teas. 6pm. Adult £7.50, chd free.

Growing a healthy garden or allotment, without using pesticides: Charlbury Scout Hut, Nine Acres Lane, Charlbury. The Wychwood Project presents a talk by Pauline Pears, who established and ran the organic advisory service for Garden Organic for 10 years. 7pm. £3. 01993815420.

The Blenheim Palace Flower Show: Blenheim Palace, Woodstock. Three-day festival. The Grand Floral Pavilion will be full of UK nurseries and growers giving you expert advice and ideas for your garden. The shopping village will feature trade stands and exhibitors. 10am. A valid Park and Gardens ticket or Annual Pass.

SATURDAY

Bicester and Kidlington Ramblers: Car Park, New Street, Chipping Norton. Moderate undulating circular 13-mile walk, possibly some road walking. Picnic lunch. Leaders Pam and Alf Wheeler. 10am. 07821 147891.

Church Fete: St Michael's Church, 1 Abingdon Road, Cumnor. 2pm. Free. 01865 863124.

Discovering Art: Vale & Downland Museum, 19 Church Street, Wantage. A workshop for aspiring young artists and families with Vicky Vergou. Booking is essential. Payment is required in advance. 10am. £7.50 per child. 01235 771447.

Exploring Acrylics (age 16+): Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot. A full day of acrylic painting inspired by nature. Price includes £14 for materials. 10.30am. £55, £50 (concs). 01235 515144.

Fathers' Day Vintage Bus Rides: Oxford Bus Museum, Next to Hanborough Railway Museum, Long Hanborough. Free vintage bus rides will run at 12.15pm and 2.45pm. Dads free, other adults £5, over 60 £4, 5-16 £3. 01993 811003.

Hailey Summer Fete: Hailey Recreation Ground, Middletown, Hailey. 1pm. Free. 01993 899125.

Little Milton Church Fete: The Old Vicarage, Church Hill, Little Milton. 2pm. Free.

National Gardens Scheme: 32 New Yatt Road, Witney. An exuberant plantswoman's surburban oasis, brimming with traditional and unusual plants in a small, but long, rear garden to an Edwardian house. Wheelchair access. Dogs on leads. Plant sale. 2pm. Adult £3, chd free.

Parish Fete: St Mary's Church, Church Street, Kidlington. 12.30pm.

St Mary's Church Fete: Shipton-under-Wychwood Village Green, Church Street, Shipton-under-Wychwood. Feast of food plus stalls and games. 1pm. Free. 01993 830842.

St Swithun's Church Summer Fair: St.Swithun's Church, Main Street, Merton. 11am. Free. 01865 331429.

SUNDAY

Beckley Open Day: Beckley village, Church Street, High Street and Otmoor Lane, Beckley. 13 gardens open, views over Otmoor, art show, teas, bouncy castle, books, plants, cakes, ice creams. 2pm. Adults £5, children 16 and under free. 01865 351637.

Benson Open Gardens: Benson Day Centre, Off High Street, Benson. Approx 20 gardens will be open with several never having been open to the public before. 2pm. Adults £5, accompanied under 16s free. 01491 838711.

Father's Day at Cogges: Cogges Manor Farm, Church Lane, Witney. Vintage and classic motorbikes, cars, working steam engines, and traditional farm machinery and tractors. Plus live music. 10am. Adults £6/children £4.50. 01993 772602.

National Gardens Scheme: Middleton Cheney. Nine open gardens in this large village with C13 church. Wheelchair access. Plant sale. Homemade teas. 1pm. Combined Adult £5, chd free.

National Gardens Scheme: Blewbury. Seven delightful gardens in charming downland village. Wheelchair access. Dogs on leads. Homemade teas. Coaches welcome. 2pm. Combined Adult £5, chd free.

National Gardens Scheme: Brize Norton. Eight delightful gardens to be seen in this Domesday village. Wheelchair access. Dogs on leads. Homemade teas. Coaches welcome. 2pm. Combined adult £4, chd free.

National Gardens Scheme: The Old Vicarage, Bledington. 1.5 acre garden around a late Georgian vicarage (1843-not open). Gravel driveway and gentle sloped garden can be hard work. Dogs on leads. Plant sale. Teas. 2pm. Adult £4, chd free. 01608 658525.

Ramblers walk: Hensington Road car park, Woodstock. Ten-mile walk via Stonesfield to join the Oxfordshire Ramblers annual picnic. 10am. 01844 213608.

MONDAY

Vale of the White Horse Branch, Berkshire Family History Society: Long Furlong Community Centre, Boulter Drive, Abingdon. Talk by Debbie Kennett – 'DNA and using genetic ancestry in your family history'. 7.30pm. 07851 206313.

TUESDAY

Cafe Scientifique (age 16+): Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot. Talk followed by a discussion with audience members. See http://www.didcotfirst.org.uk/news-cafe_scientifique.html. 7.30pm. Free. 01235 515144.

Glimpses of Summer: Vale & Downland Museum, 19 Church Street, Wantage. A text and image introdutory workshop by auther Debrah Martin and artist Vicky Vergou. Learn how to use words and images to portray the signs of summer. 10am. £15 (£14 for senior). 01235 771447.

WEDNESDAY

Doing our Bit: Vale & Downland Museum, 19 Church Street, Wantage. RAF Milton (known as Milton Depot) was a major RAF storage area throughout WW2. Towards the end of that, a captured German V2 rocket was transported there, ironically, using a prototype 'Queen Mary' trailer that was designed and built there. This was just one of the little-known events in the area during WW2.
This talk discusses other unique contributions to the war effort that took place in the Vale of White Horse. 7.15pm. £5. 01235 771447.

Learn to crochet: Vale & Downland Museum, 19 Church Street, Wantage. A five-week beginner course. Working towards a Granny square, you will learn everything you need to accomplish it. Email slipstitc53@outlook.com for more details. 1.30pm. £50. 01235 771447.

What's On for Kids Roadshow: Carterton Primary School, Burford Road, Carterton. Event to showcase after school/school holiday activities for children. 2pm. Free. 01993 842502.

To get an event of any kind listed here, enter the details into our easy-to-use online database at thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/events

Please add your event no later than ten days before the day of publication.

Music

THURSDAY

Inn For All Seasons, Barringtons, Burford: Steve Ashall. Free. 5.30pm. 01451 844324.

The Wheatsheaf, 129 High Street, Oxford: Jazz pianist Robin Aspland accompanied by The Spin Trio. The Spin Jazz Club. 8.30pm. £10, £8 (conc), £6 (student).

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Out Of The Blue. All-male a capella group. 7pm. £15, £13 (concs).

Unicorn Theatre, Checker Walk, Abingdon: Jess Vincent. Americana and folk. 7.15pm. £12.

The Cock Inn, Combe: Nick Gill. Classic jazz and ragtime piano/vocals. 8pm. Free.

FRIDAY

Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul, Church Street, Deddington: Deddington Jazz. Modern and Latin American jazz. £10 per head. 7.30pm. 01869 337428.

Great Western Staff Association Club, Station Road, Didcot: Back Water Rhythm & Blues Band. Didcot Red Hot Blues Club. £5 on the door. 8.30pm. 01235 412256.

Holy Trinity Church, Church Street, Shenington, Drayton: Moonrakers. Songs and tunes from the English, Irish and Scottish tradition. £10. 7.30pm. 01295 730344.

St Mary's Church, Church Green, Witney: All-American music concert. The San Marco Chamber Music Society from Florida. £10 on the door. Schoolchildren free. 7pm. 01993 702202.

The Black Swan, Bath Street Abingdon: Laurence Live. Free. 9.30pm.

Watlington Hill Farm, Hill Road, Watlington: Beacon Festival. £29 weekend ticket, youth £18, under 16 free. 6pm. 07779 732097.

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Nelly. US rap superstar. 7pm. £26.50, £80 (VIP).

O2 Academy, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Alkaline, Showtime Damion. Reggae star. 10pm. £30.

SATURDAY

The Brewery Tap, 40-42 Ock Street, Abingdon: Bandoneon Viajero. Tangos, Milongas, Valses from Argentina; and jazz standards arranged for bandoneon and baritone sax with guest George Haslam. Free. 6pm. 01235 521655.

O2 Academy, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: StillMarillion. Tribute to classic Fish-era of British prog-rock band, Marillion. 6.30pm. £12.

The Unicorn Inn, Market Place, Deddington: MiniDeddyRocks Festival headlined by The Lilyhammers. 5.30pm-late. Free.

SUNDAY

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Braids. Canadian experimental pop trio. 7pm. £10.

Oxford Wine Café, 38 South Parade, Summertown, Oxford: John-Paul Gard Trio. Hammond organ, guitar and drums. 6.30-9pm. Free.

MONDAY

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Kaz Hawkins/Husky Tones. The Haven Club. Blues. £10 adv £12 otd. 8pm. 01865 244516.

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: Crobot. Pennsylvanian hard rockers. 7.30pm. £11.

New Theatre, Oxford, 2 George Street, Oxford: Let It Be. Beatles tribute show. 7.30pm. £20.90-£30.90.

TUESDAY

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Stuart Henderson Quartet. Jazz. 8.30pm. Free.

O2 Academy Oxford, 190 Cowley Road, Oxford: The Brian Jonestown Massacre, Little Barrie. Californian garage rockers. 7pm. £16.

New Theatre, Oxford, 2 George Street, Oxford: Let It Be. Beatles tribute show. 7.30pm. £22.90-£33.40.

WEDNESDAY

The Comrades Club, Newbury Street, Wantage: Zelda's Jazz Room presents international clarinet star Pete Allen with his Reeds and Rhythm. £10. 8pm. 01235 765648.

New Theatre, Oxford, 2 George Street, Oxford: Let It Be. Beatles tribute show. 2.30pm, 7.30pm. £20.90-£33.40.

Theatre

Glee Club, Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford: Jun 18, Tom Allen, Owen O'Neill, Michael Fabbri and Clint Edwards. 7.15pm. £14.50. 0871 472 04007.

The Old Fire Station, 40 George Street, Oxford: Jun 20, *Cloudcuckoolanders.* 6.15pm. £10, £8. Jun 20, *Poor Life Choices.* 7.45pm £8, £6. Jun 20, *Helen Duff: Come With Me.* 8.15pm. £10, £8. Jun 20, *Melody.* £8, £6. 8.45pm. Jun 21, *Declining The Future.* 6.15pm. £10, £8. Jun 21, *The Book of Darkness & Light.* 7pm. £8, £6. Jun 21, *Letters To Windsor House.* 9pm. £10, £8. Jun 22, *Something Borrowed.* 6.15pm. £8, £6. Jun 22, Rhiannon Faith. 6.45pm. £10, £8. Jun 22, Antigona and Me: A Rehearsed Reading. 7pm. £5. Jun 22, *Till Debt Do Us Part.* 7.45pm. £8, £6. Jun 22, *Shakespeare's Avengers Assembleth: Age of Oberon.* 8.45pm. £10, £8. Jun 22, *Wanna Dance With Somebody! Or, A Guide to Managing Social Anxiety Using Theoretical Physics.* 10pm. £10, £8. Jun 23, *3 Generations.* 6pm. £8, £6. Jun 23, Rounds. 6.15pm. £10, £8. Jun 23, *Goose: Edinburgh Preview.* 7pm. £8, £6. Jun 23, *Foreign Body.* 7.45pm. £8, £6. Jun 23, *The Road To Huntsville.* 8.15pm. £10, £8. Jun 23, *Angus Dunican: The Vanity Project* (Work In Progress). 8.45pm. £8, £6. 01865 305305.

Oxford Playhouse, Beaumont Street, Oxford: Until Jun 16, *Brideshead Revisited.* 7.30pm. £15-£31. 01865 305305.

Multiple locations, Becket Street, Oxford: Jun 23-Jul 30, *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* Creation Theatre will take audiences on an immersive interactive adventure in small groups across multiple locations. 7.30pm. £24. 01865 766266.

New Theatre, George Street, Oxford: Jun 13-18, *Priscilla Queen of the Desert.* 7.30pm. £15-£42.50 plus £4 transaction fee. 0844 871 3020.

North Wall Arts Centre, South Parade, Summertown: Jun 21, *Can I Start Again Please.* Through a poetic script delivered in English and British Sign Language, the play dissects childhood trauma via an exploration of the power and failings of language. 8pm. £14, concessions £12. 01865 319450.

School Field, Magdalen College School, Oxford: Jun 17-18, *Furious Folly. Furious Folly* takes place as night falls, in a no-man's land on the battle front between two lines. Taking place in the centenary year of the battle of the Somme, Furious Folly creates an evocative, disorientating war-torn landscape from sound, light and pyrotechnics. 10pm. Free. 01865 305305.

SJE Arts, Iffley Road, Oxford: Jun 21, Poetry Live with Ben Okri. 7.30pm. £15/12/2. 01865 253505.

Studio, Magdalen College School, Cowley Place, Oxford: Jun 22, *Hickory Dickory Murder.* The Dead Secrets' improvised murder mystery. 7pm. £10/8/2. 01865 253505.

University of Oxford Botanic Garden, Rose Lane, Oxford: Jun 18, Shakespeare's Sonnets. Readings with musical interludes, performed by RSC Associate Joanne Pearce, Silent Witness actor Tom Ward and upcoming acting talent Barney White. 5pm. £10/8/2. 01865 253505.

Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot: Jun 18, *Black Is The Color Of My Voice.* Inspired by the life of Nina Simone. Age guide 12+. 7.30pm. £15, £13.50 (concs). 01235 515144.

Corn Exchange, Market Place, Wallingford: Until Jun 17, Wallingford Corn Exchange Drama Festival 2016. Amateur drama groups compete in an adjudicated competition for a variety of awards. 7:45pm. £5 or reduced price for omnibus tickets. Available on door or www.cornexchange.org.uk 01491 825000.

CakeSport

banburycake.co.uk/sport



Luke Ryan was the pick of the Banbury attack, taking 4-45 in their draw at Great Tew Picture: Steve Wheeler

Leaders hit by Tew draw

Perfect record is over, but Banbury stay top

BANBURY'S 100 per cent start to the Division 1 season came to an end as they drew at Oxfordshire rivals Great & Little Tew.

After being put into bat, Tew's top order laid down a solid platform.

Joe White top-scored with 59, ably supported by Jordan Garrett (48) and Dain Moreton (33).

Luke Ryan (4-45) ripped out the middle order, but Tew were not dismissed until the 64th over, when they had reached 216.

Banbury's reply was built around Kurtis Patterson (92 not out).

But Andy Harris (5-65) left them on the brink of defeat at 169-9, before Bradley Taylor survived 18 balls as they finished on 183-9.

GREAT & LITTLE TEW

M Clark b Penhale	13
J Garrett c Hawtin b Wright	48
D Moreton c Hawtin b Wright	33
J White lbw Ryan	59
C Slatter b Penhale	8
L Brock c Patterson b Sabin	9
H Smith c Patterson b Ryan	5
A Harris c Patterson b Ryan	8
J Thomas lbw Ryan	0
M Woods not out	11
L Brock st Hawtin b Sabin	9
Extras	13
Total (all out, 63.5 ovs)	216

Fall: 1-46, 2-92, 3-129, 4-140, 5-165, 6-182, 7-191, 8-198, 9-198.

Bowling: Penhale 12-3-40-2, Taylor 4-0-7-0, Wright 19-1-69-2, Blanchard 2-0-15-0, Ryan 18-3-45-4, Sabin 8.5-2-29-2.

BANBURY

H Darby c Garrett b Woods	18
C Haupt c Smith b Harris	10
K Patterson not out	92
L Sabin c Lloyd Brock b Harris	13
W Hawtin b Harris	0
L Ryan c Moreton b Harris	14
A Blanchard lbw Harris	8
K Penhale lbw Thomas	1
C Hill b Thomas	2
O Wright c Moreton b Lloyd Brock	1
B Taylor not out	4
Extras	20
Total (9 wkts, 48 ovs)	183

Fall: 1-28, 2-38, 3-99, 4-101, 5-123, 6-155, 7-158, 8-162, 9-169.

Bowling: Woods 14-2-50-1, Lawrence Brock 3.5-0-17-0, Harris 18.1-5-65-5, Lloyd Brock 6-2-17-1, Thomas 6-0-19-2.

Great & Little Tew 15pts, Banbury 10

Division 1

	P	W	D	L	NR	Bon	Total
Banbury	**6**	**5**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**7**	**110**
Henley	6	5	0	1	0	3	103
High Wycombe	6	3	0	2	1	15	86
Finchampstead	6	3	0	2	1	14	85
Burnham	6	3	1	2	0	19	82
Gt & Lt Tew	6	2	1	2	1	20	69
Tring Park	6	2	0	3	1	22	68
Slough	6	1	1	3	1	31	60
Harefield	5	0	0	4	1	26	32
Reading	5	0	0	5	0	25	25

Puritans sign naming deal over stadium

BANBURY United have received a cash boost after selling the naming rights to their ground.

An initial three-year deal is worth an annual five-figure investment to the Evo-Stik Southern League club, which will see the Spencer Stadium re-named the Banbury Plant Hire Community Stadium.

Mark Allitt, commercial director at United, said: "We're extremely proud of our Banbury Spencer roots, but we've found that since becoming a fan-owned club, the interest from the Banbury business community has soared.

"The fans took over the club last August and having now won promotion (to the Premier Division), we want to keep the club moving forward and we felt this was the right deal."

Chairman Ronnie Johnson said: "We'll be looking at some way of incorporating our Spencer roots into an area of the stadium, so that we always remember the history of our great club."

STARS with Claire Petulengro



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ARIES Mar 21-Apr 19

You are allowing work problems to get the better of you. Arrange to step back and do something which you know relaxes you. I can see you've spent far too much of your time and energy lately trying to please others who would not go as far for you. Setting boundaries hands you back the power you've been craving. Ring now so we can talk about what you did last weekend.

0906 585 4360

LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

Try not to be harsh on a close one who has told some sort of a lie or you could be setting boundaries you will not be willing to live by. Fellow Librans help you find your feet in new business deals and may also be able to work alongside you. Accept an apology from an older face as they will not be making it a second time. Ring for short cuts in work and monetary matters now.

0906 585 4366

TAURUS Apr 20-May 20

There are several opportunities for you to make your mark in life this week, but all of them require you to leave your comfort zone. Go for it Taurus, as I can see from your stars that you have what it takes to get to the top. Last minute travel disruption is your chance to show how good you are in a crisis. Ring now to hear how solo business ventures have success written all over them.

0906 585 4361

SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

What you think to be fact may well turn out to be fiction and it would be to your advantage to wait and watch until you've seen what this week can reveal. A new challenge in your career offers you the chance to take your talents to a whole new level. Voice your desire to get ahead. It's what can make your future a great one. Ring now to hear how relationships are in for a major shake up.

0906 585 4367

GEMINI May 21-Jun 20

There is an air of urgency to your love life which is telling me that you may be rushing into something which is not actually in your best interests. Slow your pace and don't be afraid to ask questions. They are what can gain you the respect you have been longing for. Others actions cause you distress, but know in advance you will never be blamed by others. Ring now for support.

0906 585 4362

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

You think you don't have the tools you'll need to succeed in what is ahead, but you are wrong my friend. Listen when others talk, and try not to talk at or over them. This is the beginning of great things for you if you can learn to slow your pace. A brush with fame in your career proves exciting. Ring now to hear how June promises to boost your emotions in love and relationships.

0906 585 4368

CANCER Jun 21-Jul 22

Something you have tried to succeed in has failed, but that doesn't mean you can't succeed next time around. Regardless of what happened, what is important is that you tried in the first place and that is what those who matter will take into account. A new attraction makes for an awkward atmosphere with friends. Ring now so I can tell you about tomorrow today.

0906 585 4363

CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

It would be wiser for you to focus on the small things which, by the way, appear to be largely taking care of themselves. No matter how small a thing you have left undone, focus as they will multiply. You discover good news financially which may require you to seek out a legal form or document of some sort. Ring now to hear how older males relate to life changing news.

0906 585 4369

LEO Jul 23-Aug 22

A more confident Leo is slowly, but surely emerging and you no longer worry about how others view your dreams. You realise and acknowledge that it is how you feel that really matters. Time taken out of life to think and reflect helps you to reach a decision which puts your life firmly back on a constructive course. Ring now to hear how Saturn helps you reclaim lost finances.

0906 585 4364

AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

Instead of getting angry with a close one, why don't you try asking what the motivation behind the decision they recently announced was? You'll soon discover that there is far more to this story than first meets the eye. The pieces of the jigsaw of life you put into place help you feel happier and more secure about where you are going. Ring now to hear why you can afford to ask for more.

0906 585 4370

VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

Hurry Virgo, you are running out of time to make your mark in the professional world, as someone is getting tired of waiting for you to fulfil your so far empty promises. I know you're worried about doing something which is yet to be tackled, but hold your head high. You can and will succeed my friend. Ring now to hear how Mercury helps you heal an old family rift.

0906 585 4365

PISCES Feb 19-Mar 20

If you can avoid telling lies, then do so, but it seems that many of your sign really do feel as if they had no choice. News of babies or pregnancies helps you realise that the majority of your close ones make decisions without consulting others. Acknowledge this with grace and insight, not anger. Ring now to hear why it is imperative to show support to family over the weekend.

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There may be an opportunity for additional hours of work beyond the core 10 hours per week, on an "as and when required" basis, according to the level of business of the Town Hall. It is anticipated that the majority of the working hours will be evenings or weekends.

Full details, job description and application forms are available from the Town Council website and should be returned not later than Monday 27 June 2016. Interviews Friday 1 July 2016.

For further information or to discuss the role contact Mark Recchia (Town Clerk) or Mark Hassall (Deputy Town Clerk).

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An artist's impression of how the houses at Hanwell Fields will look; right, typical interiors

Bellway Homes all set to launch new development

Gill Oliver
gill.oliver@nqo.com

THE NEW Hanwell View development in Banbury launches this month.

Bellway Homes is building 412 houses off Southam Road, after receiving full planning permission from Cherwell District Council last October.

The firm says the town will benefit from a £12.8m boost including its contributions to a new £4.9m primary school, leisure facilities and community centre.

As part of the planning agreement, the building will also put £5.4m into a bus service for Hanwell Fields during the next 10 years.

Other contributions include the funding of a new part-time community development officer post, costing £20,000.

Made from stone and brick combination, the homes will range from two to five bedrooms and all have garages or off-road parking.

These are the first phase of a proposed 510 properties.

Prices start from £287,995 for a three-bedroom semi-detached with open-plan kitchen and dining room plus a separate living room.

A four-bedroom detached house, with open-plan kitchen and family area plus separate dining room, study and living room, costs £474,995.

Chris Edginton, sales director for Bellway Northern Home Counties, said: "Hanwell View is a landmark development for both Bellway and the town of Banbury.

"We're pleased that we will not only be creating a new vibrant community, but also bolstering the town's existing appeal with our injection of funding.

"The proximity of Hanwell View to key transport links already makes Banbury an ideal place to live for families and commuters alike.

"Rejuvenated amenities will only strengthen its desirability."

Bellway is also launching a new development of two, three and four-bedroom homes in Blewbury near Didcot this month. Chailey Gardens will include 18 properties, surrounded by open countryside.

Claire Brooks-McGoldrick, sales director for Bellway Thames Valley, said: "We are delighted to be launching this new development in Blewbury."

Chailey Gardens will launch on June 18, with prices ranging from £399,950 to £725,000.

■ For information call Bellway on 0118 933 8020 or visit bellway.co.uk

Contact property writer Gill Oliver with your stories on 01865 425475 or email propertyedit@nqo.com

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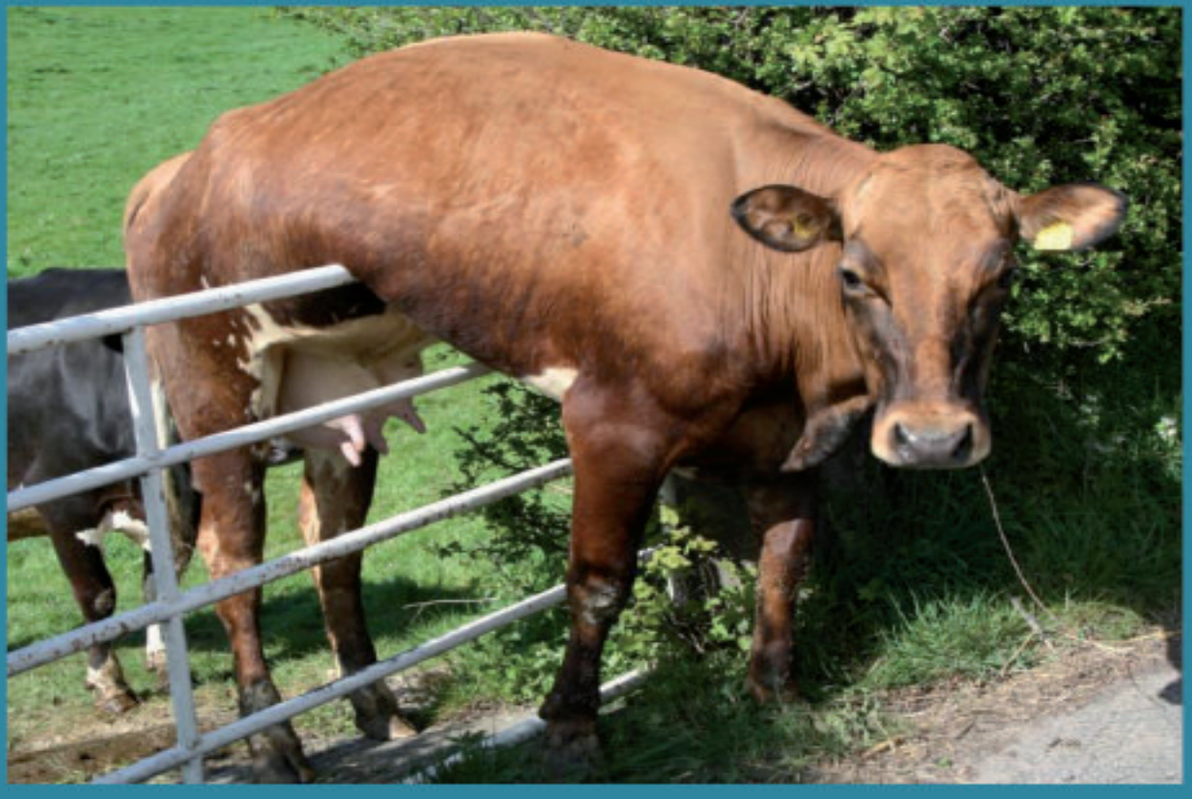
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Flat 3, Dorita House

Martin & Co are pleased to offer this one bedroom flat for rent on the Broughton Road. The property comprises: entrance hall, living room, kitchen and bedroom. It is unfurnished, neutrally decorated and is available from 6th June. The property is conveniently situated for the town centre and the train station. EPC Rating E.

£625



67 Waltham Gardens

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market two bedroom house conveniently situated in Grimsbury within walking distance to the train station and the town centre. The property comprises; kitchen; living room; two bedrooms and a bathroom with bath and shower. the property also benefits from a rear enclosed garden. Available unfurnished. EPC Rating: D

£795



Room 3, 66 Broughton Road

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market one bedroom room with ensuite shower in a shared house conveniently situated within walking distance to the town centre and train station. The room benefits from a kitchenette area also. The room is fully furnished and all bills are inclusive. Ideal for a single professional.

£550



119 Broom Way

Martin & Co are pleased to present this spacious three bedroom property. The property comprises a separate kitchen with fridge freezer and washing machine; spacious lounge overlooking the garden; upstairs there are three bedrooms and a family bathroom with bath and shower. The property benefits from a rear enclosed garden and allocated parking.

£875



25 Sage Close

Martin & Co are pleased to present a large three bedroom furnished property. The property comprises: spacious entrance hall with storage cupboard; dining room; kitchen with separate breakfast area.Good sized first floor lounge; separate utility room. The master bedroom benefits from fitted wardrobes and an ensuite shower room.

£1050



flat 2 Butchers Row

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market stunning one bedroom apartment conveniently situated in the town centre within walking distance to all local amenities including the train station. The property comprises a spacious open plan kitchen and living area; one double bedroom and a separate bathroom with shower and WC.

£650



Elizabeth Rise

Martin and Co Banbury are pleased to present this three bedrooms detached property. The property comprises; Porch, entrance hallway, cloakroom/WC, sitting room, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, utility room, three good sized bedrooms, family bathroom, gas central heating, double glazing, single garage, off road car parking, large rear garden. EPC - D

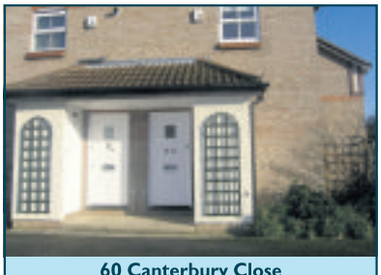
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flat 1, 41 Middleton Road

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market two bedroom apartment conveniently situated within walking distance to the town centre and train station. The property comprises open plan kitchen living room; two bedrooms and bathroom with bath and shower. Ideal for a professional couple or single person. EPC Rating D

£695



60 Canterbury Close

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market one bedroom house situated in a quiet location within walking distance to the town centre and the train station. The property comprises open plan kitchen and living room; one double bedroom and bathroom. The property is available unfurnished. Ideal for a single professional or a couple. EPC Rating: D

£625



18 Barcombe Close

Martin and Co Banbury are pleased to offer to the market, this one bedroom semi-detached house in the Hardwick area of Banbury. The property comprises; spacious lounge, kitchen, double bedroom with fitted wardrobes, and bathroom. EPC Rating D

£695



2 Kings Road

Martin & Co are pleased to present this two bedroom cottage situated in the village of Bloxham. The property benefits from one double bedroom and a second smaller bedroom / office. The bathroom contains a WC and a shower. Good size kitchen and living room. Washing machine and fridge available. EPC rating C

£825



flat 3 Enhance Court

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market one bedroom stunning apartment situated conveniently in the town centre near to Banbury Cross. The property comprises: an open plan kitchen and living area; good size double bedroom; bathroom with bath and shower. EPC Rating: D

£725



7 Cherwell Wharf

Martin and Co Banbury are pleased to present, this 3 storey town house, situated next to the canal and close to town centre. The property comprises; two reception rooms, three double bedrooms, two bathrooms, kitchen and decked area to the rear of the property. Allocated parking. EPC Rating C

£975



67 Waltham Gardens

Martin & Co are pleased to present a new to the market two bedroom house conveniently situated in Grimsbury within walking distance to the train station and the town centre. The property comprises; kitchen; living room; two bedrooms and a bathroom with bath and shower. the property also benefits from a rear enclosed garden. EPC Rating: D

£795



46 Centre Street

Martin & Co are pleased to present a spacious four bedroom mid terraced property situated in Grimsbury within walking distance to the town centre and train station. The property comprises two reception rooms; kitchen; upstairs there are four bedrooms on 2 split levels. The master bedroom benefits from an ensuite bathroom. EPC Rating: D.

£995



31 Lord Feilding Close

Two bedroom staggered terraced property located north of Banbury in Hanwell Fields. The property comprises of; living room, kitchen, two bedrooms and a bathroom. The property also has gas central heating, double glazing throughout, spacious enclosed rear garden, ground floor W/C and a car port. EPC Rating C

£825

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Motors - first for new cars

New Car Road Test



The definitive view
by Andy Enright

Peugeot warms to its theme







PEUGEOT has a strong history in family hatch-sized hot GTi contenders. Here's one of the most potent ever, a 308 GTi model that produces up to 270bhp and it is ready to do battle in this sector with the Ford Focus ST and the Volkswagen Golf GTI.

Background

Ever since the launch of the 205 GTi, Peugeot has been a go-to brand for hot hatch fans. The company's shopping rocket models include a roll-call of outstanding performance cars: the 309 GTi, 206 GTi, 306 GTi-6... and so on, right up to the recent RCZ R, 208 GTi 30th and 208 'GTi by Peugeot Sport' models. Now, that same 'Peugeot Sport' division has brought us this car, the 308 GTi.

In a sector filled with impressive hot hatches, the 308 GTi is aimed at the very top of the tree. That means its rivals include the Volkswagen Golf GTI, the Ford Focus ST and the Renaultsport Megane 265. It'll have to be very good indeed to succeed in this exalted company.

Driving Experience

The 308 GTi is aimed at the enthusiast end of the market - in every way a red-hot hatch. Hence the effort that's gone into tuning both the chassis and the 1.6-litre THP turbo engine, a unit offered in both 250 and 270bhp guises. Either way, performance is strong, both versions quicker over the benchmark sprint than the Ford Focus ST. The most powerful unit will get from a standing start to 62mph in 6.0 seconds, while the lower powered 250bhp variant can complete the benchmark sprint in a time of 6.2 seconds. Both models will go on to a top speed of 155mph.

Opt for the GTi 270 version and it comes with a hi-tech Torsen limited-slip differential, this channelling the power to the wheel with the highest grip. That'll make this top Peugeot much quicker through the bends: it's certainly the version most would rather have.

Design and Build

This 308 GTi certainly looks the part, offered with clean lines that build on those of the standard car. As you'd expect though, this top hot hatch has more road presence than its siblings, with a muscular stance and plenty of enhancements to the exterior to make it stand out from the crowd.

This includes exclusive styling front and rear and a lowered ride height that sees this car sit 11 millimetres lower to the ground than the standard 308. The nose features full LED headlamps, flanking a smarter black radiator grille with a horizontal chequered pattern and gloss-black finishing. The same motif is echoed on the air intake, which is surrounded by sequential LED indicators and a red detail strip. Below the bumper, two front spoilers boost aerodynamic performance.

In profile, the redesigned door sills hint at the car's aggressive nature, while the sleek rear design features a gloss-black section housing the twin exhaust pipes. With a wider track of 1,570mm at the front and 1,554mm at the rear, this GTi has been engineered to offer exceptional grip. GTi 250 versions are shod with 18-inch alloys, while the GTi 270 variants feature dynamic 19-inch 'Carbone' light-weight wheels.

Jump inside and you'll find a Peugeot i-Cockpit cabin enhanced to reflect the sporting nature of the car, with additional detailing to signify this performance version.

Market and Model

List pricing for the Peugeot 308 GTi starts from around £26,000 and rises to around the £28,000 mark for the higher-powered car. Both models are more expensive than a Ford Focus ST, but the lower powered 308 GTi is cheaper than a VW Golf GTI.

Both 308 GTi variants are well kitted out. In the top-spec GTi 270 version, Peugeot Sport 'bucket' seats are upholstered in Alcantara with red stitching and provide cosseting lateral support. The compact steering wheel carried over from the standard car is here offered with a full-grain leather design featuring the GTi logo at the bottom and a red centring mark at the top.

The cabin has the 308 model's now familiar i-Cockpit instrument layout and customers can also opt for a Driver Sport Pack. This gives you a 'Sport' button on the centre console: press it and the instrument display changes from white to red. At the same time, you also get extra information on the central read-out (details on power, torque, boost, lateral and longitudinal acceleration). Plus the 'Sport' mode enhances the engine's throaty growl and changes accelerator pedal mapping for a more engaging driving experience.

Cost of Ownership

Running costs can be steep when it comes to hot hatches but the 308 GTi is actually quite impressive here. The engine is arguably the most efficient in its sector, as you might expect given that it's just 1.6-litres in size (rivals use 2.0-litre units). CO2 emissions are rated at 139g/km, while combined cycle fuel economy is figured at 47.1mpg. Residuals will be strong if the market takes this car to its heart.

Summary

Peugeot seems to be rediscovering a little of its hot hatch magic. The 208 GTi showed us that the company's 'Sport' division still knew how to build a decent shopping rocket and this 308 GTi model seems to confirm that feeling.

For the full-fat experience, you really need the 270bhp version but assuming you can stretch to that, then there's much here to like.

Facts at a glance

CAR: Peugeot 308 GTi
PRICES: from £26,855 - £28,455
INSURANCE GROUPS: 15E-T2
CO2 EMISSIONS: 139g/km
PERFORMANCE: [270bhp] 0-62mph 6.0s - 6.2s / top speed 155mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION: (combined) 47.1mpg
STANDARD SAFETY FEATURES: twin front, side and curtain airbags, stability control, ABS brakes with EBD and EBA
WILL IT FIT IN YOUR GARAGE?: Length/Width/Height mm 4253/1804/1450

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2005 55	**VOLKSWAGEN POLO 1.2 S 55.** Black. 5 Doors. PAS. Aircon. Radio/CD. Central locking. Electric windows and door mirrors. Very nice small car in lovely condition. Approximately 78000 miles. Local car. Sold with a new MOT a full service and a new cambelt. HPi Clear £2,795.00
2005 55	**VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6 LIFE TWINPORT.** Metallic Dark Grey. 5 Door. Local car. Lovely condition. Good service record. PAS. Remote central locking. Radio/CD. Electric windows and mirrors. Air-conditioning. Sold with a new MOT a new cambelt kit and a full service. HPI clear £2,650.00
2005 54	**TOYOTA COROLLA T3 VVTi.** Red. 5 doors. Local car previously supplied by ourselves. PAS. Aircon. Alloys. Electric windows and mirrors. Remote central locking. Excellent service history. Lovely throughout. Car was fully serviced by ourselves less than 1000 miles ago. Sold with a new MOT. HPi Clear £2,550.00
2005 05	**NISSAN MICRA 1.2S,** metallic blue, 5 door hatchback, 2 owners, local car, PAS, electric windows, remote central locking, cd/player, etc, very nice condition, drives very well, Sold with a new MOT, a full service, and a new cambelt kit, HPi clear £2,350.00
2005 54	**ALFA ROMEO 156 JTS Veloce 2.0.** Silver Metallic. Black leather interior. Very nice condition throughout. Local car. Alloys. Air con. PAS. Radio/CD. Remote central locking. Electric windows Etc. Sold with a new MOT a full service and a new cambelt kit. HPI clear £2,195.00
2002 51	**FORD MONDEO ZETEC 2.0 TDCi,** 5 door hatchback, metallic blue, local car in very nice condition throughout, PAS, alloys, aircon, remote central locking, electric windows and doors and mirrors, radio/cd, very nice example of this popular large diesel car, Sold with a new MOT, a full service, and a new cambelt kit, HPi clear £1,995.00
2008 08	**FORD KA,** Met red, very low mileage aprox only 28,000 miles, local car, pas, radio/CD, super condition, sold with a new mot and a full service, HPI clear £1,995.00
2003 03	**FIAT PUNTO 1.9 DIESEL.** Metallic dark red. 5 doors. Previously supplied by ourselves. Air-conditioning. PAS. Central locking. Electric windows. Radio. Very tidy and economical car for it's age. Sold with a new MOT a full Service and a new cambelt. HPI clear ..... Arriving soon
2004 04	**PEUGEOT 206CC COUPE. CABRIOLET.** 1600cc Petrol. Black. ..... Arriving Soon

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Used Car Road Test



by Jonathan Crouch

Getting it note perfect







THE Nissan Note is one of those cars that doesn't ever elbow its way to front and centre in order to gain attention but owners will attest to the fact that it's a vehicle that just works. There's little that's glamorous, exciting or which will elicit covetous glances from your neighbours but sometimes what you need is something utterly dependable, wholly practical, incredibly easy to drive and which serves to make the business of buying and running a car as painless as possible. The Note is that car and it's why with a relatively low key marketing push it's become one of Nissan's best-selling vehicles in the UK. Here's how to track down a used one.

The History

No, your eyes do not deceive you. We're starting the clock on this used test in 2009, fully three years after the Note was first launched in the UK because the model we're looking at here is the updated car which was launched in mid 2009 and which incorporated a suite of changes not only to the styling but also to equipment provision and also to the efficiency of the powerplants. Revised gear ratios boosted fuel economy and improved emissions of the 1.4 and 1.5dCi models. Further incremental improvements were visited upon the car's emissions for the 2011 model year petrol-engined Notes which became fully compliant with the Euro 5-emissions requirements. The styling changes are the key clue-in that you're looking at one of the facelifted cars. Look for a chrome strip running along the bottom of the front grille beneath the big Nissan badge. You can't rely on the trim levels as the old S, SE and SVE trims were replaced by the more lifestyle trim levels that were being rolled out across the Nissan range back in 2009. In 2013 an all-new Note was displayed at the Geneva Motor Show, bringing a more dynamic looks and feel to the model.

What To Look For

On paper, this car is roughly equivalent in size to its immediate rivals at just under four metres long, 1.53m high and 1.69m wide. In the metal however, it appears lower and longer with minimal rear overhang and quite a pronounced nose protruding at the front. The facelifted model we're looking at here got a 2009 package of tweaks including a reshaped bumper and bonnet, revised headlights and a shiny black front grille. At the back, compared to the original Note, the tail lights are darker and models with parking sensors got them incorporated more neatly into the bumper.

It's on the inside, however, where owners of the original 2006 to 2009 Note model will notice the most significant changes. After that date, all models got better-quality, soft-touch interior plastic and mildly redesigned instrument graphics.

There really is very little to report here. The Note is a very reliable car and runs on mainly tried and tested mechanicals. Check for parking damage and ensure the car has a full Nissan service history and buy with confidence. The original warranty was a three year one, so cars out of warranty should make decent bargains as owners trade in for newer tackle. According to Which?, the Note is the 10th

On The Road

Try and imagine a GTi hot hatch version of the Note. You can't can you? And that's just the point. Giving a car like this a powerful engine or stiff suspension would be as pointless as giving a fish legs. It's not what it's about. Still, the Note always feels highly nimble on the road with ride firm enough to resist roll and steering that's light but accurate.

It's perfect for buzzing through the city streets and it inspires confidence thanks to good all-round visibility and a tight turning circle. If you really value syrupy, supple suspension, one of the Note's rivals may be a better option but otherwise, this Nissan should suit its intended buyers pretty well.

Three main engine choices are offered, all shared with the model that at launch was this car's arch-rival, the Renault Modus. Low mileage buyers will choose between a 87bhp 1.4-litre and 108bhp 1.6-litre powerplants, but those who might want to take their Notes further afield may want to consider the improved diesel engine, a 1.5-litre dCi common rail unit borrowed from the Micra range with 85bhp on tap.

In the unlikely event that you fancy giving some teenager a run for his money away from the lights in your Note, the 1.4-litre car will get to 60mph in 13.1s, the diesel is fractionally slower at 13s and the 1.6-litre petrol takes 10.7s. None of the engines are what you would call quick but they're all more than adequate for everyday driving, with even the 1.4 pulling reasonably strongly through the gears.

Overall

There's so much that can go wrong with buying a used car that many people are completely deterred. The Nissan Note reliability and sheer practicality means that it's a car that you can buy used without too much worry. They're usually owned by mature or family buyers who have the cars diligently serviced. Just as long as you don't chance upon one that's been ravaged by unruly kids or pets, you shouldn't go far wrong here.



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Motors - first for new cars

New Car Launch Model Of The Week



by Jonathan Crouch

Reverting to type once again







FIAT is back in the family hatch segment with this car, the Tipo. Smartly styled in Italy and developed and built in Turkey, it looks a much more credible contender than anything the Italian brand has brought us in this class for decades. UK buyers get a choice of petrol and diesel engines and hatch and estate bodystyles that are exceptionally spacious.

Background

In recent years, it looked as if Fiat might be abandoning this traditional market segment in favour of more specialised Crossover models like their 500X. But cars like that still sell in something of a niche, so the Italian brand has, once more, turned it's hand to creating a conventional contender in this class. Arguably the last time the brand was truly competitive here was with its Tipo family hatch, which sold between 1988 and 1995. It's appropriate then, that this new model also wears a 'Tipo' badge.

Driving Experience

The smart styling won't disguise the fact that this is unlikely to be the sharpest handling car in its sector, but when we get to drive one, we expect it to be close enough to the class leaders to satisfy most potential buyers. The engine range includes five options in total. There are two turbo diesel units - a 1.3-litre MultiJet II producing 95bhp and 200Nm and a 1.6-litre MultiJet II with an output of 120bhp and 320Nm. This 1.6-litre diesel engine can also be combined with a six-speed TCT twin-clutch auto transmission.

The petrol engine range kicks off with a 1.4-litre 16v powerplant producing 95bhp and 125Nm, then moves on to a 1.4 turbo petrol variant with 120hp and 206Nm. At the top of the line-up, the 1.6-litre e-TorQ engine produces 110bhp and 152Nm and is combined exclusively to a six-speed automatic transmission.

Design and Build

Like its predecessor, this Tipo hatchback promises to be exceptionally roomy and is capable of accommodating three six-feet-plus adult passengers in the rear - thanks to class-leading legroom and outstanding headroom within its 4.37m long, 1.79m wide and 1.50m tall dimensions. Its boot capacity is also best-in-class with a volume of 440-litres, while the estate version adds an additional 110-litres of boot space which, at 550 litres, is also class leading. It can carry loads of up to 1.8m in length courtesy of an extra 20cm of length (4.57m), a flip-and-fold 60/40 split rear seats and completely flat load floor. The estate body style has a height of 1.51m thanks to the standard-fit longitudinal roof bars.

Market and Model

Fiat knows that it will have to price this car competitively if it's to make any real impact at all on the Focus, Astra and Golf-dominated family hatch segment. Expect it to undercut Focus prices and be hugely cheaper than a comparable Golf. Fiat's targets here will be value-orientated platers in this class like Nissan's Pulsar, Kia's cee'd, Citroen's C4 and Hyundai's i30. That means a likely pricing span in the £14,000 to £19,000 bracket.

Even at those kinds of figures, Fiat will still need to make sure that this car is very well specified - and has. All UK models come as standard with air conditioning, Bluetooth 'phone connectivity, power mirrors, a multi-function steering wheel and a DAB audio system. Plus of course there are all the usual safety systems - a full complement of twin front, side and curtain airbags, plus the usual electronic assistance for stability, traction and braking.

Cost of Ownership

The 1.6 litre turbo diesel engine, fitted with second-generation MultiJet technology and variable geometry turbocharger, delivers impressive fuel efficiency and low emissions. On the official combined test cycle, the Tipo 1.6 MultiJet II 120hp returns 76.3mpg and produces just 98g/km of CO2emissions.

Finally, a word about warranties. You get two years of manufacturer cover with this car, plus a further year from the dealer. Plus there's no mileage limitation, which makes this Fiat deal better than the restricted three year/60,000 mile package you get with rival Astra, Golf and Focus models. There's also a year of roadside assistance cover, a reasonable three year paintwork warranty and an eight-year anti-perforation guarantee.

Summary

Fiat knows it has an awful lot of ground to make up in this segment. Is this Tipo the car to do it? It certainly offers a more competitive proposition in this sector than anything the brand has been able to offer for a very long time. And it can be put together in its Turkish factory very cheaply, allowing UK Fiat dealers to offer value pricing and tempting deals, yet at the same time, include lots of equipment for the money.

No, it's not going to appeal to someone who would otherwise be buying a Volkswagen Golf. Or even, perhaps, a comparable Mazda3 or Honda Civic. But then here, you're not going to be paying the sort of inflated prices that tend to be attached to those kinds of cars. If you were looking at more affordable models in this sector, say, a Kia cee'd, a Citroen C4 or a Nissan Pulsar, we definitely think you should include the Tipo in your deliberations. And it's a long time since we've been able to say that about any kind of Fiat in this class.

Facts at a glance

CAR: Fiat Tipo
PRICES: £14,000-£19,000 [est] - on the road
INSURANCE GROUP:TBC
CO2 EMISSIONS: [1.6 MultiJet II 120hp] 98g/km
PERFORMANCE: [1.6 MultiJet II 120hp] 0-62mph 11s/ Max Speed 116mph [est]
FUEL CONSUMPTION: [1.6 MultiJet II 120hp] (combined) 76.3mpg
STANDARD SAFETY FEATURES: twin front/side/window airbags, driver's knee airbag, ABS, ESP
WILL IT FIT IN YOUR GARAGE?: length/width/height 4370/1790/1500mm

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